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NAHANNI

NATIONAL PARK RESERVE

FEBRUARY 1987

MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROGRAM

NEWSLETTER #6

MANAGEMENT PLAN SUMMARY

Pulpit Rock. "The Gate."

FOREWORD

This plan summarizes and highlights the major decisions arising from the Nahanni National Park Reserve management planning program. The plan reflects the park's significance as Canada's premier wilderness river national park and the country's first UNESCO World Heritage Site. It also expresses Environment Canada's policies and mandate applied to the special regional patterns and traditional land uses of the park area.

Public involvement in the planning program has been extensive. While many divergent opinions have at times emerged, one view has remained strong and consistent: the wilderness character of the park, and especially that of the river corridors, must remain uncompromised. Nahanni presents an exceptional opportunity to preserve and promote world-class wilderness river recreation, reflecting as it does the national interest that led to the establishment of this exceptional park in the first place.

How people gain access to and experience the park has been a prime consideration of the plan. Recognizing that more people wish to visit key features of the park for at least a short period of time, I have approved increased air access to Virginia Falls.

The plan also recognizes that non-motorized watercraft are the preferred and most economic way visitors can enjoy the river environment. As a result, I have agreed to restrict access by motorcraft to assure a wilderness consistent with the park's purpose and objectives.

I thank the many people who helped contribute to the plan through their briefs, letters, and participation at meetings. Such interest ensures that Nahanni National Park Reserve will be managed in a manner that meets the high expectations of Canadians.



Tom McMillan, P.C. M.P.
Minister of the Environment



Tugotoho Plateau

1.0 PARK PURPOSE STATEMENT

1.1 PARK DESCRIPTION

Physical Description

Nahanni National Park Reserve occupies a 4766 square kilometre area in the heart of the Mackenzie Mountains. Located in the southwest corner of the Northwest Territories, the park is a wilderness corridor centered on the course of the South Nahanni and Flat rivers.

The park occupies one-seventh of the South Nahanni watershed which drains an area of 35,000 square kilometres into the Mackenzie drainage basin via the Liard River.

Nahanni National Park Reserve is a Natural Area of Canadian Significance representative of the Mackenzie Mountains Natural Region. Located in the northern section of the Cordilleran physiographic region, the area is mainly

mountainous with a diversified topography consisting of mountain ranges, rolling hills, elevated plateaux, broad depressions, and incised river valleys. In the east and central park areas, sandstones, shales, and limestones of dissected mountain ranges predominate. These contrast markedly with the classic alpine shapes of the igneous Ragged Range at the park's western extremity. One of the most striking landscape features of the park is the river entrenchment of the lower South Nahanni. Largely untouched by glaciation, the river has formed steep-walled canyons and sheer cliffs, in some places over 1000 metres deep. Perhaps the best known feature of the park is Virginia Falls.

Other landform features of significance include numerous hotsprings exemplified by Wildmint and Rabbitkettle Hotsprings. The sheer granite faces of the Ragged Range are world renowned and well known to the international climbing fraternity. A spectacular karst above First Canyon and Grotte Valerie, a fine example of a solution cave, represent the well-developed features of the aqueous so-

lution of limestone. The sub-Arctic setting of these karst features, in an area unmodified by glaciation, is considered to be of great geomorphological significance.

The climate of the park area is continental. Wide monthly variations in temperature and precipitation occur year to year. Variations in temperature and precipitation are also apparent between the eastern and western ends of the park, the eastern end being generally warmer and drier. Hot dry summer weather may predominate for weeks, yet snow has been recorded in valleys of both the Flat and South Nahanni rivers in all months of the year.

The vegetation of the park is predominately boreal with a transition from lowland wet areas to alpine tundra. White spruce and trembling aspen characterize valley bottoms. Montane and subalpine zones are by far the most common vegetation zones in the park with extensive spruce and pine mixtures. Several noteworthy plant communities are represented around hotsprings, alluvial fans, and in the karst plateaux.

Nahanni includes portions of the habitats of significant



Grizzly Bear

wildlife species such as Dall's sheep, black and grizzly bear, wolf, golden eagle, peregrine falcon, and trumpeter swan. An unusual faunal diversity is found in the park for such a northern location because of the variation in topography and vegetation. The rugged and remote nature of the Nahanni country has also served to protect its varied wildlife species.

Sixteen species of fish have been found in the South Nahanni River drainage, including lake trout, Dolly Varden, and Arctic grayling. While large lakes are relatively few in the park area and biotic production is low, especially at higher elevations, these water bodies show a diversity of species from lake to lake.

Park Use, Access, Facilities, and Services

Access to Nahanni can be achieved by a variety of routes. There are no roads to the park. The Liard Highway from Fort Nelson to the Mackenzie Highway allows road access to within 64 river kilometres of the eastern park boundary. Chartered air services are available at Fort Simpson, Watson Lake, Fort Nelson, and Fort Liard. The village of Nahanni Butte is the closest community to the park, 32 river kilometres from the eastern park boundary. Chartered float planes have been the usual mode of access to Nahanni headquarters for visitors using non-motorized methods of river travel or for those wishing to fly to Virginia Falls for the day. Road access to tributaries of the upper South Nahanni is possible via Tungsten (Northwest Territories) or the Canol Road (Yukon Territory).

The park's administration headquarters is located in Fort Simpson. A year-round operations centre is located across the South Nahanni River from the village of Nahanni Butte.

In keeping with the park's wilderness objectives, visitor facilities are few. Only three designated campgrounds are located along the 300 kilometre course of the South Nahanni River through the park. These are Rabbitkettle Lake, Virginia Falls, and Kraus Hot Springs campgrounds. Visitors may register at the Fort Simpson headquarters, Nahanni Butte Warden Station, or at Rabbitkettle Warden Station. Check-in stations are located at Virginia Falls, Deadmen Valley, and Kraus Hot Springs.

Nahanni receives over a thousand visitors per year. Visitation has increased an average of 14% per year for the past decade. The majority of visitors, 71%, are Canadians. Americans comprise another 22% of visitation with the remainder being primarily of western European origin.

The visitor season in Nahanni is short. Peak visitation is during July and August (36% and 53% of visitation respectively). Day-use visitation to Virginia Falls accounts for over 30% of the total park visitation. Remoteness, severity of climate, and the absence of year-round facilities discourage winter use.

River travel is the most practical and popular way of experiencing the park. In the recent past, 90% of travel was by non-motorized craft (rafts, kayaks, canoes) while 10% was by powered craft (scoops, jet-boats, airboats). Almost



Kayaking



Hiking on Tlogotsho Plateau.

25% of visitors use licensed outfitters operating non-motorized craft. The park controls air access and overnight use by permit and registration systems for park management and visitor safety reasons.

The majority of visitors come to experience Nahanni's awesome canyons, and to see Virginia Falls, a spectacle of incredible power, within the setting of a wilderness river corridor. The park encourages appreciation and enjoyment of its wilderness, rugged environment and natural beauty. Visitors can experience the thrill of superb wild river touring which is the primary visitor activity in the park. Recreational opportunities and the rudimentary facilities (primitive campgrounds, portages) are designed to ensure that the wilderness character of Nahanni is maintained.

Although there are as yet no developed trails in the park, opportunities for off-river hiking to alpine tundra areas, and ridge walking, are among the finest in the country. Opportunities for wilderness camping, nature study and photography are outstanding.

While Nahanni represents one of the premier wilderness-oriented parks in the Canadian national park system, it is also accessible to those unable to take an extended river trip. Air access to Virginia Falls allows people of all ages and abilities to see the park's most spectacular feature. Although not an activity generally associated with wilderness parks, day-use via air access allows all Canadians to see the key features of Nahanni while retaining the river corridor for traditional wilderness recreation pursuits.

Considerations

- The wilderness river character of Nahanni was a prime rationale for the park's establishment. It is also the paramount factor in park management and development.
- Nahanni is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and Canada's obligations as a member state adhering to the 1972 World Heritage Convention, means Canada's responsibility to protect the park is correspondingly greater.



Virginia Falls.

pondingly greater.

- It is recognized that Nahanni exists within a specific social and economic region of the Northwest Territories. Environment Canada, Parks has a commitment to consider the impact of its operations relative to regional concerns. This includes issues such as fire management, co-operation in wildlife management, and the recognition of the rights of native people as guaranteed by the 1974 "Park Reserve" clause amending the National Parks Act. The park will also co-operate with agencies working in adjacent areas by liaising on projects of mutual interest such as tourism and territorial park development.
- Certain areas of the park have been traditional hunting and trapping grounds. Wildlife harvesting permits native residents of the area to continue with traditional pursuits and provides an important source of sustenance. Park operations provide some employment and economic opportunities for local and regional residents.
- Since Nahanni National Park Reserve is located at the downstream end of the South Nahanni watershed, regional planning, water-use licensing, and overall development of the watershed are important considerations to the health of park resources. Through inter-agency co-operation, Parks will ensure that water quality and environmental integrity are maintained.
- The segment of the South Nahanni River flowing through Nahanni National Park Reserve has also been included in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System. As a Canadian Heritage River, the national park segment of the South Nahanni will be managed in ways that ensure the protection of the distinctive heritage values for which the river was nominated.

1.2 PARK PURPOSE

Purpose of the Park in the National Park System

The primary purpose of Nahanni National Park Reserve is to protect for all time a Natural Area of Canadian Significance representative of the Mackenzie Mountains Natural Region so that present and future generations can continue to appreciate and experience the park's wilderness environment.

Heritage Resources and Processes

The Nahanni wilderness river corridor has one of the most impressive canyon systems in Canada. The South Nahanni is an especially powerful river with large flow volumes and great seasonal variations. Virginia Falls (92 metres high) is one of Canada's great cataracts, with almost twice the vertical drop of Niagara Falls. The lower reaches of the South Nahanni River are bordered by sub-Arctic karst landscapes recognized to be of particular scientific significance. This karst has escaped glaciation for up to 300,000 years, an unusual occurrence in such northern latitudes.



Koot

The limestone solution caves above First Canyon number in the hundreds. Grotte Valerie displays extensive development of caverns, ice-falls, and other cave features. The cave is also noted for the discovery of dozens of Dall's sheep skeletons inside the labyrinth. Some of these remains are over 2500 years old.

The canyons, superb alpine tundra, and the crags of the Ragged Range provide habitats for a variety of animal



The Ragged Range

species which are under increasing pressure as development extends into the north. Particularly significant wildlife includes Dall's sheep, grizzly bear, peregrine falcon, trumpeter swan, mountain goat, and woodland caribou.



Dall's sheep

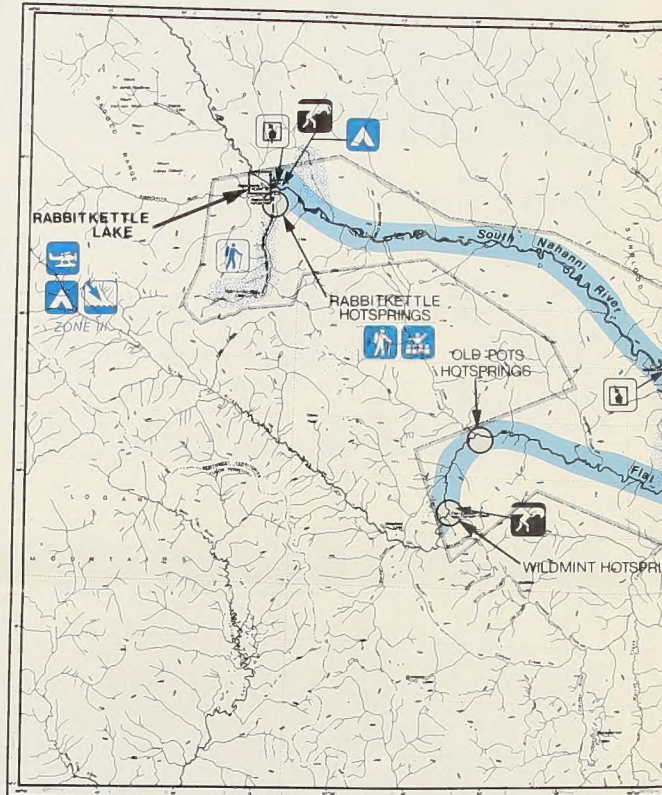
Other features of particular note abound in the park. The Sand Blowouts is an area of sandstone outcrop displaying formations of contorted, wind-sculptured arches and pillars, while the glaciated peaks of the Ragged Range provide superb examples of cirques, hanging valleys, and Matterhorn-like peaks.

Although the native history of the Nahanni region dates far into the past, little cultural information has been recorded. Its people, ethnologically classed as Gwich'in or Mountain Indians and Kaska Indians, were known historically as "Nahannin", meaning literally "people over there,



The Mackenzie Mountains

NAHANNI NATIONAL PARK RESERVE



MAP 1. MANAGEMENT PLAN.

ZONING:

- ZONE I. SPECIAL PRESERVATION AREA
- ZONE II. WILDERNESS
- ZONE III. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

THERE ARE NO ZONE IV OR V AREAS.

RIVER CORRIDOR USE:

- NON-MOTORIZED USE (COMMERCIAL & PRIVATE (NO MOTORIZED USE))
- ACCESS TO RIVER
- DESIGNATED CAMPGROUND
- PORTAGE (EXISTING)

* DAY-USE FACILITIES:

- PRO & ASS
- VIEW
- PICN
- DOC & AIRC

far away". The first European contact occurred in the 1820's when the fur trade reached the region. However, it was the turn of the century gold rush that started the influx of explorers into the mountains of the Nahanni country. The death or disappearance of a number of prospectors fuelled the macabre tales that gave the park some of its foreboding place names: Deadmen Valley, Headless Creek, the Funeral Range. These elements have been integral to the public perception of the region and the park in particular, and continue to provide a source of wonder and mystery to present day visitors.

1.3 PARK OBJECTIVES

Protection and Preservation of Natural and Cultural Resources

Natural Heritage Resources

Environment Canada, Parks will protect for all time the wilderness river corridor of Nahanni National Park Reserve by ensuring the perpetuation of its wildlife habitats and populations, vegetation communities, land and water ecosystems.



ILITIES:

STORY
TED AMENITIES

INT

REA

G FOR

FT

OTHER CODINGS:

WARDEN CABIN (EXISTING)

GUIDED TOUR (TO RABBITKETTLE HOTSPRINGS)

TRAIL

AIRCRAFT ACCESS/ 'DROP-OFF'

AREAS PROMOTED FOR OFF-RIVER USE/TRAVEL PENDING ASSESSMENT

NEW TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

WORLD HERITAGE PLAQUE

NOTE: ALL EXISTING PORTAGES AND WARDEN STATIONS ARE RETAINED.

LEGEND

SPOT ELEVATION IN FEET: **POINT CODE ON PLANS:**
WATER AND STREAM: **RIVERINE ET NAHANNI:**
INTERMITTENT STREAM: **COARSE GRAVEL/INTERMITTENT:**
SAND GRAVEL OR MUD: **SABLE GRAVIER OU BOUE:**
LAKE: **LAC:**
FRINGE: **MARSH:**
ROAD: **CHENIERE:**
LANDPORT: **TERMINUS:**
PARK BOUNDARY: **PROTECTOR'S ROAD:**

The Nahanni wilderness will be maintained as an essentially unaltered, primitive, and unpolluted corridor, and will be sustained so that Nahanni will remain a superb wilderness representation of the Mackenzie Mountain Natural Region.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Environment Canada, Parks will protect significant cultural resources (archaeological and historical artifacts) in the park. The native and European history and traditions will be recorded to provide visitors with the opportunity

to understand and appreciate the past history of the park and its peoples.

Appreciation, Understanding, and Enjoyment of Park Resources

Environment Canada, Parks will provide appropriate and compatible opportunities for the public to appreciate, understand, and enjoy the significant resources of the park. The primary experience offered by Nahanni is the thrill of superb wilderness river touring. Compatible means of access and the provision, where necessary, of appropriate

primitive facilities (portages and primitive campgrounds), will be afforded to visitors in a manner that maintains Nahanni's river corridor wilderness.

Interpretation of the park will include both natural and cultural themes. Parks will ensure that interpretation material includes the story of the indigenous peoples of the area and their present relationships to the land. Since the park is remote, interpretation will be primarily by self-guided and non-personal means using printed materials and other approaches.

Regional Integration

Environment Canada, Parks will ensure that the planning, management, and development of Nahanni is, where possible, compatible with local and regional considerations in a mutually beneficial manner. This includes:

- working within the on-going land claims process to help ensure that the mutual interests of the Dene and Métis peoples and Environment Canada, Parks are met;
- integrating the wildlife and fire management procedures in the park with those of involved agencies and jurisdictions in peripheral areas;
- working with the Government of the Northwest Territories to ensure that mutual areas of interest are considered in the promotion of regional tourism development;
- maintaining a liaison with local communities to address mutual concerns in terms of park management practices, employment opportunities, and wildlife harvesting within the park boundaries; and
- co-operating with various advisory and regional planning efforts of federal and territorial agencies in the monitoring and management of regional land use issues that concern the park. For instance, the pristine quality of waters flowing into Nahanni is essential for the perpetuation of the park's character. Alterations that degrade the water baseline quality of the park are unacceptable, and Environment Canada, Parks will work with the appropriate agencies having jurisdictions upstream of the park's boundaries to ensure the protection of that quality.

2.0 PLAN DECISIONS

2.1 ZONING

Environment Canada, Parks five class zoning system is a reflection of the sensitive balance necessary between preservation and use. Zoning for Nahanni has been developed following analysis and synthesis of environmental information, park objectives, visitor activities, and the constraints and opportunities resulting from the plan proposals. Three of the five zones have been designated for Nahanni (Map 1).

Zone I (Special Preservation) areas are intended for the protection of unique, rare or sensitive resources. They include Rabbitkettle Hotsprings, Wildmint Hotsprings, Old Pots Hotsprings, Deadman Valley Sheep Licks, Grotte Valerie, Yohin Lake, and the Sand Blowouts. Public access to these areas will be restricted to provide the highest level of resource protection.

Zone II (Wilderness) denotes areas with a high level of resource protection with visitor activities based on dispersed and primitive forms of outdoor recreation. Maintenance of the wilderness atmosphere is paramount. The majority of the park is Zone II in confirmation of the Park Purpose Statement and Management Objectives. The application of Zone II along the park's major river corridors is especially noteworthy and is a reflection of a clear intent to manage for quality wilderness river-oriented recreation, the primary park activity identified in the Park Purpose Statement.

Zone III (Natural Environment) areas are designated for the waterbody of Rabbitkettle Lake (for aircraft access purposes) and for Virginia Falls campground and day-use area. The Virginia Falls Zone III area includes a section of river immediately above the falls suitable for aircraft access. The intent of Zone III areas in Nahanni is to provide access and a selected range of outdoor activities of a low density nature requiring a minimum of support facilities.

No Zone IV (Outdoor Recreation) or Zone V (Park Services) areas are proposed. No commercial services or commercial support facilities will be developed in the park.



Rabbitkettle Hotsprings (a Zone I area).

Existing native traditional resource harvesting activity is not affected by this zoning plan.

2.2 RESOURCE CONSERVATION

The basic objective of Resource Conservation in Nahanni is to manage terrestrial and aquatic resources to ensure the perpetuation of values basic to the park's establishment while allowing natural processes to proceed essentially uninhibited by man's activities.

The major functions of Resource Conservation in Nahanni include resource management, resource protection, law enforcement, and public safety. The following actions detail specific responsibilities for each function.

Resource Management

Resource management actions in Nahanni will include the following:

- creating and maintaining an integrated park data bank for the input, storage, manipulation and retrieval of natural resource information (Park Data Plan);
- overcoming deficiencies in the Basic Resource Inventory which is essential for effective park planning and management;
- reviewing and updating the park's Resource Description and Analysis document as new natural resource information becomes available in advance of park management plan reviews;
- implementing a Park Conservation Plan for Nahanni that will contain objectives and action plans for the protection and management of specific natural and cultural resources;
- preparing Resource Management Plans detailing reasoned courses of action including responsibilities and procedures whereby resource management problems are resolved;
- conducting or facilitating resource management studies to obtain specific resource information which is required to aid in the solution of identified resource management problems; and
- designing systematic Resource Monitoring Programs for implementation to observe, record and consider changes in the park's natural resources to ensure that resource management objectives are met.

Resource Protection

The remote location of Nahanni National Park Reserve assists in its protection. However, the wilderness character and the resource values for which the park was established could be lost unless specific precautions are taken.

Resource protection actions will include the following:

- applying the Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP) to all proposed development, use and operational plans and projects which may impact on the park resources;
- monitoring the impact of utilization of resources in order to identify and assess any deterioration which may result and establishing corrective measures as required;
- providing for the total suppression of fires in the area east of Yohin Ridge (Suppression Zone) and maintaining the rest of the park as an Observation Zone as detailed in the Fire Management Agreement with the Northern Affairs Program; and
- establishing a program of pollution detection and establishing measures aimed at controlling incidents causing pollution.

Law Enforcement

Law enforcement actions will be undertaken to ensure the protection of the park's natural and cultural resources against deprecative behavior and includes the following:

- enforcing the National Parks Act and Regulations and other relevant laws and regulations pertaining to resource conservation and public order; and

- assisting in the development of visitor education programs for both pre-trip and on-site application, with an emphasis on the need for and value of resource conservation.

Public Safety

Public safety-related actions will be undertaken to ensure the safety of park visitors and will include the following:

- establishing preventive public safety programs; and
- establishing remedial public safety capabilities including contingency plans and procedures.

2.3 VISITOR ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES

The objective of the Visitor Activities program is to provide appropriate and compatible wilderness recreation opportunities for the public to visit, appreciate, understand, and enjoy the resources of the park.

Activities

The activities offered by Nahanni will be those compatible with a wilderness-oriented national park. Generally, activities that require a primitive setting, low density of use, and an independence from services and facility developments are those that will be encouraged in the park.

World class wilderness river touring, of a non-motorized nature, is the primary activity offered by the park. Significant opportunities for other wilderness-oriented recreation (hiking, scenic touring, camping, viewing wildlife, etc.) in a remote setting are available and encouraged.



Canoeists at Kraus Hotsprings.

Day visitation opportunities at Virginia Falls will continue to be provided. Related activities (photography, viewing the falls, area touring) are promoted by the provision of low key basic and primitive facilities. Controlled day-use visitation using aircraft access provides opportunities for the many people who wish to visit this key feature of the park, the site of a World Heritage plaque.

Access

Access to Nahanni is by two principal means – aircraft, and non-motorized watercraft.



Rafting

Air access is designated at two park locations, Rabbitkettle Lake and Virginia Falls. These two areas provide the ac-



Fireweed



Floatplane at Ft. Simpson

cess considered necessary to promote river trips from the two primary visitation starting points in the park, as well as day-use access at Virginia Falls.

No landing strips or airfields will be designated or built in Nahanni.

Visitor watercraft access and circulation is by non-motorized craft. Primary river access points include the South Nahanni River on the northwest boundary, access from Rabbitkettle Lake Portage, the Flat River, and from Virginia Falls Portage.

This restriction on motorized watercraft is a key feature of the management plan. Analysis shows that private and commercial non-motorized modes of travel appear to meet the needs of most visitors wanting to tour the rivers of the park. Public opinion confirms that non-motorized travel is the preferred method of travel and the most consistent with park objectives. It is economically competitive with alternative modes of travel. Non-motorized commercial outfitting companies have established Nahanni as a world class wilderness recreation area. Their continued growth and success depends on maintaining the park's wilderness character. The use of the park's river corridors for wilderness river recreation is balanced by the provision for air-accessed day-use at Virginia Falls providing appreciation and enjoyment of the park for those with less time or inclination to take an extended river trip.

Existing native traditional harvesting in the park is not affected by this visitor access provision. *Native people may continue to exercise their subsistence harvesting activity by motorized watercraft access.*

Facilities

The primary intent behind facility considerations is to maintain the river corridor's primeval appearance. At the same time, provisions are made for essential facilities at access nodes to ensure that concentrated use does not result in site deterioration. In keeping with the wilderness nature and objectives of the park, facilities are few (Map 1).

Designated Campgrounds

Designated primitive campgrounds will be provided at Rabbitkettle Lake, Rabbitkettle Portage (on the South Nahanni River), Virginia Falls, and Kraus Hot Springs. Only Rabbitkettle Portage campground will be a new facility, designed to relieve pressure on Rabbitkettle Lake campground.



Camping at Rabbitkettle Lake

Trails

Primitive trails will provide access to three areas of thematic importance to the park: Hole-in-the-Wall Lake, Marengo Falls/Flat River, and Nahanni Karst. These are longer trails encouraging overnight camping away from the river corridors.

Access trails will be maintained to Rabbitkettle Hot Springs and Sunblood Mountain.

All trail developments will be subject to Environmental Assessment and Review Process requirements. It is expected that trail development at selected sites, as well as the provision of backcountry information and self-guiding interpretation, will encourage hiking in the park and hence, a diversification of visitor recreation activity.

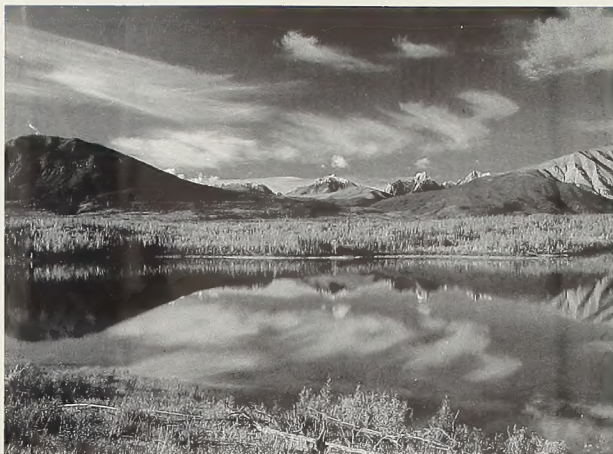
No backcountry shelters or campsites will be developed in conjunction with these trails. Random camping techniques (pack in/pack out) will be employed pending the first park management plan review.

Day-Use Facilities

Providing for day-use visitation to Virginia Falls requires redevelopment of the existing site to prevent site deterioration, while at the same time ensuring visitor safety and the provision of a quality park experience.

In addition to the rehabilitation of the existing campground, specific facilities will include an aircraft landing area, access path to the falls, a designated viewpoint-promontory area and a picnic area.

It is intended that site design separate day-use facilities,



Rabbitkettle Lake

specifically the picnic area, from the campground to avoid disturbance of overnight visitors.

Portages

Portages will be maintained to their present standards from Rabbitkettle Lake to the South Nahanni River, at Virginia Falls, Figure Eight Rapids and at the Cascade-of-the-Thirteen Steps on the Flat River. No new portages will be built.

Patrol Cabins

The patrol cabins at Rabbitkettle Lake, Sunblood Mountain, Flat River junction, and Deadmen Valley will be maintained to suitable standards. No new cabin locations will be developed for the duration of this plan.

2.4 INTERPRETATION

An interpretation communication program compatible with the park's wilderness management objectives will be developed.

Specific provisions for this communication program include:

- providing appropriate opportunities for the public to learn about and appreciate the significance and character of the park's wilderness resources;
- providing the public with the pre-trip information to prepare for their visit to the park;
- integrating with and complementing the information and interpretation programs of other government jurisdictions;
- meeting resource protection, management, and public safety objectives; and
- emphasizing the park's UNESCO World Heritage designation, and the Canadian Heritage River status of the South Nahanni.

Program Parameters

The interpretation program will be defined by the following parameters, based on the park's themes and objectives as well as other operational and policy considerations:

- no on-site interpretation facilities or exhibits will be built in the park;
- all interpretation program components will be self-guiding and cost-effective;
- visitor safety considerations will be enhanced by provision of suitable pre-trip orientation information;
- interpretation/information will help protect the fragile resources of the park through visitor awareness;
- interpretation/information will reflect the international profile and significance of the park's World Heritage status;
- all interpretation themes identified for the park will be presented. These are: (a) Formation and Geomorphology of the South Nahanni River Corridor, (b) Ecology of the Mackenzie Mountains, (c) Man in the Nahanni

Wilderness; and (d) the Meaning and Management of Wilderness; and

- interpretation/information will be integrated with regional tourism development efforts.

Program Projects

Program projects include:

- development of a park guidebook suitable for both in-park and pre-trip orientation purposes;
- development of a new interpretive exhibit for the Fort Simpson Administration Centre based on the four park themes;
- development of an educational kit suitable for distribution in regional communities; and
- development of a major audio/visual production (either film or multi-image slide show) suitable for broad distribution.

The emphasis on mass media techniques for interpretation of Nahanni is a reflection of the park's remote nature. It is also a commitment to encourage the appreciation and enjoyment of the park's heritage resources by those who may never see the park first-hand.

UNESCO World Heritage Status

In 1976, Canada became a signatory of the United Nations (UNESCO) World Heritage Convention. The philosophy and concept behind the Convention is that there are some parts of the world's natural and cultural heritage that are so outstanding or scientifically significant to the world that their protection and preservation is considered to be of concern to the world community.

The provisions of the Park Management Plan and Environment Canada, Parks program fulfill the obligations of Canada to the Heritage Convention. A UNESCO World Heritage plaque has been placed at Virginia Falls.

Canadian Heritage River Status

The Canadian Heritage Rivers System gives recognition to nationally significant rivers. The intent of the program is to ensure future management of these rivers in ways such that their natural and human heritage is conserved and interpreted.

The South Nahanni River has been nominated and accepted under the Natural Heritage Value Guidelines of the system as a heritage river.

This management plan fulfills Environment Canada, Parks' obligations for Nahanni under the system agreement, and will be submitted upon approval to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System Board as the prerequisite for formal designation.

2.5 REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The operation of the park will be integrated with the surrounding region in a fashion compatible with the park's management objectives.

Nahanni's regional integration initiatives involve several issues, many of which will be on-going concerns.

Land Claims Process

Nahanni is legally designated as a national park "reserve". The "reserve" title refers to the National Parks Act amendment that guarantees native peoples their traditional uses of national park reserve areas "subject to the settlement of any right, title or interest of the people of native origin." This plan reflects the land claims process. No provision is intended to preclude existing native rights, subject to the National Parks Act, nor prejudice the outcome of land claims negotiations.

Fire Management

As forest fire management evolves with greater territorial responsibility, Environment Canada, Parks will continue to liaise with all agencies concerned so that fire management is handled in a mutually beneficial and responsible manner.

Wildlife Management

Environment Canada, Parks will work to develop an informal working committee with representatives of the Government of the Northwest Territories to deal with wildlife management concerns in the Nahanni region.

Since wildlife habitats and movements often cross administrative boundaries, it is important that such a mechanism be developed for purposes of information exchange, monitoring, research, and wildlife survey co-operation.

Regional Resource Development and Planning

In order to accomplish Environment Canada, Parks' goal of ensuring that there be "no measurable change in baseline levels of water quality at the park boundary from developments in the South Nahanni watershed", Parks proposes:

- to develop an agreement with Inland Waters Directorate to assess baseline water quality data for the park against which water quality may be monitored in the future;
- to work with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs to establish the Mackenzie Mountains as a priority for regional planning; and
- to represent the park's best interests to the Technical Review Committee of the Territorial Water Board for projects affecting the South Nahanni watershed.

Co-operation and liaison with regional land management agencies will help meet the goals for carefully integrated land management in the South Nahanni watershed.

Tourism and Business Development

Environment Canada, Parks will co-operate with federal and territorial tourism development agencies by providing information and guidance on the visitation and tourism opportunities that Nahanni presents.

In keeping with the park's wilderness management objectives, no commercial facilities will be developed in Nahanni. The consequence of this provision is that existing regional service centres and businesses will have the opportunity to cater to visitors, especially with respect to the provision of supplies and equipment necessary for a park visit.

Environment Canada, Parks will continue to encourage the Government of the Northwest Territories to proceed with the development of territorial parks to provide services and attractions to complement the special recreation and tourism opportunities presented by Nahanni.

Commercial river guiding services have increased significantly since park establishment. These services will continue to provide an important business opportunity for entrepreneurs as better marketing and promotion of the region is established.

Nahanni is one focal point for the region but is by no means the only tourism opportunity. In short, Nahanni is recognized as one segment of a total regional tourism development effort that requires close co-operation between federal, territorial, municipal and native organizations.

Native Employment and Training

Environment Canada, Parks endeavours to provide employment and training opportunities for native residents of the Northwest Territories. The operation and management of a national park involves a number of positions requiring different experience and skills. The desirability of providing training opportunities for local and regional residents so that they may develop the skills required to operate and manage national parks is recognized. Environment Canada, Parks will work with existing programs and agencies to promote native training and employment opportunities.

Cultural Resource Management

Environment Canada, Parks is committed to co-operation with the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (Yellowknife) and the Archaeological Survey of Canada in promoting the preservation and presentation of significant cultural resources that may be identified in Nahanni. While bearing the primary management responsibility for the cultural resources within the park boundaries, Environment Canada, Parks is committed to a co-operative spirit in terms of any research, artifact preservation and presentation.

Boundary Reviews

When Nahanni was established in 1972, little detailed resource information was available about the area. As a result, the park's present boundaries are not based on a systematic evaluation of resources. It was understood that as detailed studies of the region became available, the park's boundaries could be adjusted to take this new information into account.

Environment Canada, Parks is continuing to pursue boundary changes for Nahanni National Park Reserve. To ensure regional involvement, Parks will work with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the Government of the Northwest Territories through the Federal/Territorial Lands Advisory Committee.

Boundary adjustments will be sought in three areas considered to be of importance to the representation of park themes: Ragged Range, Tlogotsho Plateau, and the Nahanni Karst (Map 3, page 9).

Environment Canada, Parks will also develop a mechanism and schedule for contacting public and private regional interests to provide them with a forum for responding to boundary proposals as they develop.

2.6 ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Administration Centre Location

For the life of this plan, the park will continue to be administered from the Fort Simpson Administration Centre.

It is essential for park officers to maintain contact with regional interests to be more effective in dealing with matters of mutual concern. This effectiveness is dependent on proximity to, and having continuous communication with, officers and offices of these various interests and jurisdictions.

For these and other reasons, such as the existing capital development, the administrative function will remain in Fort Simpson and will be augmented in the off-season by the addition of the permanent operational field staff.

Nahanni Butte Warden Station

Nahanni Butte Warden Station requires redevelopment. Analysis has determined that the Nahanni Butte area is the most effective location for an Operations Centre. However, a seasonal on-site presence is considered sufficient for effective and efficient park management.

A new Nahanni Butte Warden Station will be developed on the village side of the river. The station will be manned continuously during the visitor season. Permanent staff will reside in Fort Simpson.

The relocated Nahanni Butte facility will be used to stage off-season operations on an "as and when needed" basis (e.g. resource research, patrols, monitoring).

Guiding and Outfitting

Environment Canada, Parks recognizes the territorial government's outfitting ordinance license requirements as the prerequisite for application for a National Park Guide License. The actual business licensing requirements are the responsibility of the territorial government since the



Nahanni Butte

business registration aspect of outfitting does not occur in the park. However, Environment Canada, Parks will regulate the actual guiding services provided to ensure that a known standard is maintained. These standards deal with aspects of visitor safety, resource protection objectives, and a knowledge of the park waterways and the methods by which the guiding is to be carried out. The Superintendent will set the requirements necessary to obtain a Guide Licence as provided for in the National Parks Business Regulations.

There will be no restriction on the number of commercial outfitters operating in Nahanni. However, should scheduling and quota systems become necessary at some future date, compliance by the commercial operators would be necessary to ensure that any pre-set capacity requirement for the park is met in an equitable manner.

Group Size and Park Visitation Capacity

Based on visitor surveys and other recreational area examples, group size limits for Nahanni are set at twenty persons for rafting groups and twelve for canoe groups.

Analysis of park surveys indicates that Nahanni could sustain a recreational capacity of 3600 river travellers per year. This limit is set as an initial management reference point. When 75% of this capacity is reached, or at each five year management plan review stage, a reassessment of this limit will be made.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW PROCESS

The Nahanni Management Plan has been screened for potential environmental impacts arising from management plan provisions. No significant impacts to the biophysical environment were identified.

Further environmental screening will be necessary for those issues not yet considered (such as any boundary alterations that may arise).

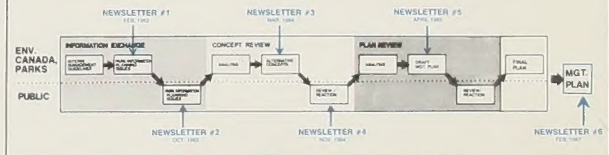
Specific projects scheduled for implementation will require incorporation of environmental screening prior to any site work or activity being undertaken.

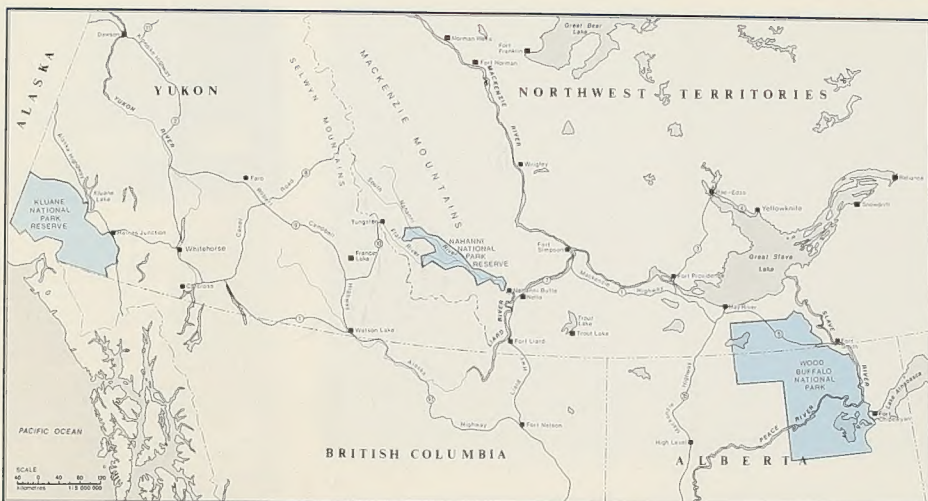
4.0 SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATEMENT

The social and economic implications of the Nahanni Park Management Plan provisions were reviewed at an earlier stage of the planning program. This review reflects Environment Canada, Parks' policy to conduct analysis to determine the anticipated socio-economic impact of a management plan. Socio-economic considerations can influence plan decisions. An awareness of such implications will be maintained as this management plan is implemented.

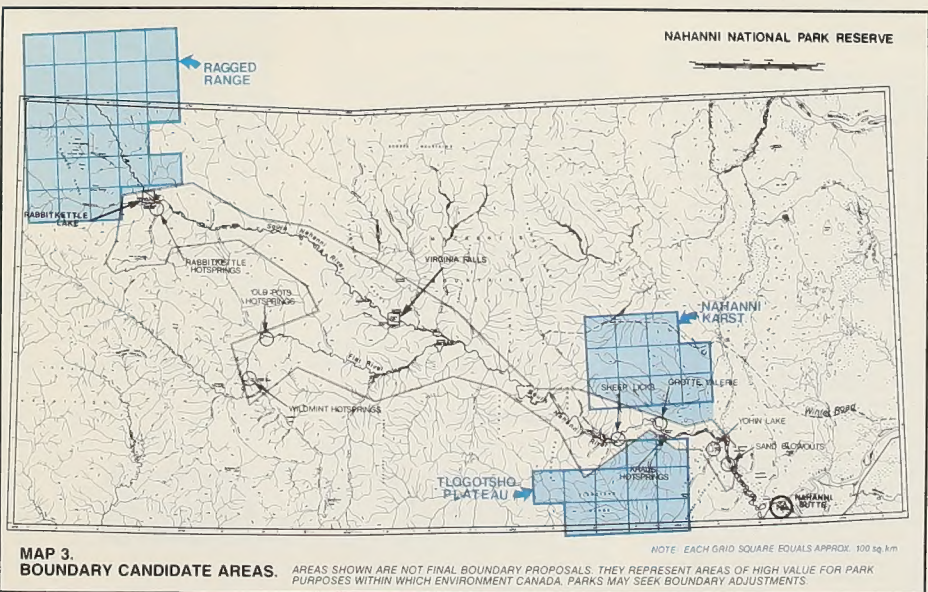
This Management Plan Summary is the final stage of the management planning process.

PLANNING PROCESS





MAP 2.
REGIONAL SETTING OF NAHANNI NATIONAL PARK RESERVE



MAP 3.
BOUNDARY CANDIDATE AREAS. AREAS SHOWN ARE NOT FINAL BOUNDARY PROPOSALS. THEY REPRESENT AREAS OF HIGH VALUE FOR PARK PURPOSES WITHIN WHICH ENVIRONMENT CANADA, PARKS MAY SEEK BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS



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